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INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND
EDUCATION OF THE DEAF SYMPOSIUM
"ONLINE DESIGN: ACCESS FOR DEAF STUDENTS"
PRESENTER: {PRESENTER NAME}
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Patricia De Caro. "online design: Access for deaf students".

>> REGINA: Good morning, everyone. I just passed out an
evaluation form, and if you could please fill that out after
the session and then give it to me. I'll be standing at the
back of the room near the door. This session is number
311 D.

>> DR. De CARO: Am ion? Okay. Good. I just want to let
you know I work at the Rochester Technical Institute. I am
really not good at technology. I am not sure why I work here.

I just thought I'd let you know that. That's why they're being
very helpful and careful with me, okay? My name is pat.

Mudgett-DeCaro. I worked here at NTID for, I don't know, since
1970. And I will not -- I gave you the hand
{KPWROUT}s, but

I'm not going to -- handouts, but I'm not going to follow it.

I'm going to skip over a lot. So I will try to tell you
where

I am if you're looking at it, otherwise, don't. Now, I'd like
to ask from this point on, I'd like to ask if you would
interpret for me, but I want to first thank you very much for
doing that and to remind you that Leslie is here as an
interpreter for all of us to facilitate our communication.
Okay? Thanks. Stop, okay. Let me just ask you to give me
some brief idea of what you think of when you think of access
for deaf students. Any ideas?

>> Communication? Equal communication.

>> DR. De CARO: More? Other?

>> Opportunities.

>> Equal access.

>> DR. De CARO: At this conference, you will see a lot of
high tech kind of access. A lot of people here know a lot more
about high tech than I do. I'm working on it. But in your
situations, you may have teachers who are not very good at
technology or for whom it's a very slow process. Or you may
have difficulties in getting this high tech equipment. So you may want it, but you can't get it. You may understand it, but you can't get it. I am still using a mostly text-based, written form of online education. That can pose some serious disadvantages for some of my students. For whom the written form of the language is not easy. So for me, I had to look at what I can do at this point in time and think: Even though this is text-based mostly, how can I make it the most possible accessible to my students, deaf and hearing? Access is not only through technology. In my case, I look at it from the standpoint of curriculum design. , as well. I also think of access as another aspect of access being if I were a deaf student sitting in the classroom, would I be able to not only access the information communication wise, but also would I have some link to my own experience. My experience of being deaf in a hearing world. So that's another aspect. One of
the

things I try to do, and this is what I will show you, is to use

a wide variety of approaches in the online course. I made

videotapes and sent them to the students. I tried to establish

a very informal tone where no one feels uncomfortable writing
to me about anything. I don't care how good their English is.

I don't care. I want communication. I'm online every single
day. To make sure that if there's something there, I respond

very quickly. I set up teams of students to help each other,
deaf and hearing. They have a handson product that they're
creating and in the end is ready to go. Ready to use. I ask

them to have discussions with me in journals. And they have
discussions with each other. This is all based -- there are
also lots of readings that they have. But this is in addition
to the usual lecture/reading discussion format. Now I'm going
to skip to slide number 7, if I can find it. It's on Page 3.

Slide number 7. You'll see it in the right-hand corner. On your handout if you wanted to look at the paper. For this class, it's a master's program class. I see I left out a word.

So my English is not so great, either. I have both deaf and hearing students. It's a master's level program. I'm skipping two, to "approaches." I teach two different sections. One section is here, classroom. The students come once a week. We meet in person, face-to-face. The rest of it is online.

Another one is completely long distance. Distance learning.

One in Puerto Rico, one in Kentucky, one in Albany. Which do I prefer? I prefer the class here, the face-to-face. That's my preference. But there are many people out there who can't come. They can't do that. They're full-time teachers or they're far away someplace. They can't do it. But through the distance learning course, they can get it. Not what I consider the best, maybe, but good. The next we'll show you the
desktop

appearance of the course. Can you see? Yes. The little flags

mean there's something there that I haven't read yet. There's

one for information. There's a survey. I ask them to tell me

about their experience with deaf education or just deaf people

in general, if they're not deaf themselves. Their experience

with peoples of other cultures. And their experience with

computers. There are a lot of teachers out there like me.

There's a whole lot of them out there who aren't any more

comfortable with technology than I am. I like to know that

ahead of time. Where are we? And if you don't like

technology, why are you taking this course?

Introductions.

I'll show you examples of these. Biographyes of the people who

are on the videotapes. Examples of the unit plan product that

they will produce. I post a lecture at the beginning of each

topic. We have discussion boards for every topic.
Homework is
up there. Send the homework back to me into the drop box.

PowerPoint presentations send to me. It's really important in
a distance situation to set up what I call a "coffee pot."

You want to talk about recipes? Talk about it there. You want
to tell me about your dog? Or each other? Fine. Put it
there. Get to know each other. Education in the news daily.

What's happening? Teaching process. Sometimes students have
said to me, "I don't like the way you're teaching this course
right now or this thing or whatever." fine, let's talk about
it. Let's all talk about it. What's a better way to teach
this thing? You're all earcher teachers or future teachers.

How do we improve?
The first one of the -- of what's not there anymore -- are
the introductions, I mean, the information. Wait, all right,
the introduction. All the way through I use examples all the
time. So the example of my introduction. Now, please
send

your own introductions with a digital picture, if you can. You

may not have the equipment, that's fine. Don't do it. If you

have the equipment, please. I already talked about the coffee

pot. This is the information area. Syllabus, guidelines, exactly what do I want you to do? And how will it be graded?

For example, this is the first part of it, and it's quite boring, but the format and organization. They know from the beginning what I'm going -- from the guidelines and also from the criteria what exactly will I be expecting from you? They can go back again and again to these and say, "oh, I completely forgot about something."

Right. I don't have to tell you. I will. But you can catch it yourself. There's no reason for a student at the end of the quarter to be surprised at their grade. No reason. In fact, by the time they're done grading themselves, I ask them to send me what they think. And 90 percent of the time,
I agree completely. Sometimes not quite. So then I say, here's what I think. But I've been giving them so much feedback that it should be no big surprise. Then there's the videotapes. They're signed in American Sign Language. They're captioned.

And it's several guests. Here's one. Remember, I consider access also to be access to, shall I say links between themselves and the material? These are "multicultural" link possibilities. On this videotape are four students with different cultural backgrounds. This is a bio from one of them. These students on the videotape tell the teachers what their experience was like. What was andy's experience? With an Asian background at home and a Caucasian, WASP background in school, WAST means white -- somebody tell me? Anglo American Protestant? Were there misunderstandings? I'll give you one example. Some of the Asian students that we've had in my
previous courses would be evaluated from my perspective from an American WASP perspective as not willing to participate in class and not looking directly at me. Come on, I'm trying to talk to you, look at me, you know. Not much participation. If I don't think about that a little bit and get to know something about different cultural proper behaviors in different cultures, I might give a lower grade for that person. Because that's not what I want. I want you to jump in. Why aren't you doing that? That's one example. I have a thousand. So these students tell us what we need to know and how we could better teach them.

Then there were some teachers. Deaf and hearing. They teach deaf students and they explain how they include into all their subjects, doesn't matter what the subject, they include those links to deaf experiences in everyday life. Parents. Deaf and hearing. They share with the class the experiences, both good and bad, that they've had with
teachers

in the school systems.

Students who are deaf and -- deaf and perhaps have cerebral

palsy or perhaps have Usher's Syndrome. Or something else.

Physical challenge. And who are deaf and have some form of

learning disability or challenge. Which doesn't mean that

they're not smart and can't do it. It just means it's tough.

They're going to need another way to get to the information.

They tell us their best and worst.

The product. This should be in their area of study,

whatever that is. If they're going to do math, fine, do it

math. They develop a unit which covers at least five classes

which they should be able to use completely, ready, walk out of

the class with this thing ready. Or very close. They send an

outline, three drafts and the model. They send it to me

online. I respond in a different color on their plan. I send

it back. I like first-class because that's the platform, the

software, I like it because I can keep always a copy of
what they sent me first and what I sent back.

When they send me the next draft, I pull up the response I gave to them the last time. And I can say, "good. They addressed that." or, "forgot. Go back and look at the feedback the first time. I didn't ask questions just to be silly."

This next slide is an example which has too many words on it. Don't try to read it all. I just want to point out a few things. One student had been to Australia and wanted to include in his future classes a unit about aboriginals in Australia. But these are some ways in which he made links to people coming from different places: Deaf, different cultures,

and made sure that the material was both physically accessible to someone with a physical -- other physical disability, but also discussion.

So he wants to use one of those -- anybody know? Did you redo? It's a long instrument that makes a very deep sound. I
don't know how to spell it. He wants to get into a discussion

with the class of music and this instrument. And how you can

appreciate it. He also wants to talk about the effect and

interactions of the Europeans and the aboriginals in Australia.

And then he wants to make a link to how does this compare to

deaf/hearing interactions? He wants to set up an Email writing

contact. And discuss that. He wants to talk about aboriginal

art on rocks. Which is considered art. And then he wants to

say, "when you see the side of a building in the United States

with what we call gra feety, -- Grafiti, not good, people

writing on walls, people making pictures on walls and fancy

signatures. He wants to ask: How is that different from

aboriginal work on art -- on rocks? So that it goes on and on.

But wonderful links.

We have teams that work together. And they all are expected

to share their evolving unit plans with each other, send the
whole thing, talk about it, discuss it. They're not in
competition. Even if it's the same subject they're
Teaching,
they'll approach it differently. So they can send ideas
and
suggestions and reactions back and forth. At the end, each
student makes a PowerPoint slide show. For the classes
who are
here, they present in person. But for the students in
Puerto Rico and Kentucky and Albany, they send the
PowerPoint slide
show and they send a script, word for word what am I going to
say when you read that? What would I say if you were sitting
right in front of me? This is a quick example. This focusing
on the English ASL dictionary. So this makes use of a
guest.
This touches on the fact that many different cultures have
different explanations, different cultural stories that relate
to the universe. And then a trip. This is a link to a very
common, fun way of using sign language within the deaf
culture.
Creating stories with letters of the alphabet. I have seen some of the most fabulous stories where you go straight through the alphabet, A, B, and it depends on the shape of the hand.

Take advantage of this fantastic, creative ability that's out there and ask the students to come up with an ABC story using the first letter of each planet, in order of where they are from the sun, out. And share that with the rest of the group.

Now, that one I can't do in an online course, but she's creating it for her inclass course, which is important. Visual, that's an obvious one. And the use of drawing for students whose strength is in that area. I mention that before. There are discussion boards. One of the reasons I like the class when it's here and I can use both online and the face-to-face is because I can also ask the students, all of them, deaf and hearing, who all should be able to sign by the time they get to me, at least one of their journals to be in ASL. Not in English. I haven't reached a point yet where
I can do that tech no logically, especially if they're out there and may not have access to that. I can't ask them to do that yet. Some day somebody will tell me how to do that. The important points in making this as accessible as possible even within a mostly text-based online program for me is the informality and the sharing and the teamwork. I care about the English in the final product. I don't care if they get help from somebody else. But for the everyday discussions, I don't care. I want discussion. Frequent communication. Examples and guidelines. Wide variety, et cetera. And creating the links as much as possible between experience and whatever topic we're discussing. For example, in math, one person uses the statistics from the census bureau, way back statistics, 1834 census, I think it was. How many people were identified as deaf? What was it called? Back then, slavery. How many black/African-Americans were identified as deaf? And
what was it called then? All kinds of things can be learned from one little census and used in every course that you teach. You can't always use the real high-tech stuff that you see here.

If you can't, for whatever reason, what can you do to make your mostly text-based teaching at the moment, hopefully could change more later, what can you do to make that more accessible in many ways? And by the way, the hearing students loved all of the modifications. It helped them tremendously. And that is the end of my presentation. We have 10 minutes in case anybody wants to ask anything. It is awfully hot in here, isn't it?

>> I have a question. I'm sorry, I arrived late. Who is signing for me? I'm sorry. I arrived late. But I'm curious.

Which online program are you using? Is it PowerPoint? Or is it blackboard? Or 6.0? Or what are you using?
>> DR. De CARO: I'm using first-class.

>> Oh, okay.

>> DR. De CARO: I prefer it myself. I'll sign for myself when I'm talking, yeah. I prefer it because it's very flexible. There's a lot you can do with first-class. Blackboard, prometheus and some of the others are more quickly learned. They're more "user friendly." But they're limited in what you can do. And because I'm trying to do as much as possible with the limitations of having to use mostly the written form, I want as wide a possible different uses as I can do, and first-class is good.

>> What kind of limitations does it have?

>> DR. De CARO: You mean first-class or the others?

>> Blackboard.

>> DR. De CARO: Blackboard? I don't know if you were here for where I mentioned the -- when they bring or send the unit plan and I respond in a different color and send? I can keep that and bring up -- it's it saves everything. Blackboard doesn't save. For me, that's one big disadvantage.
Blackboard

is something called "cookie cutter." Somebody else decides
what I can do. I'm trying to be as creative as possible with
this online thing, and first-class allows me to do all kinds of
different things. Blackboard is somebody else's idea of what I
want to do. And I keep getting frustrated like. But I want to
do this. Sorry, can't do that. So that's what I mean.

>> How accessible is first-class to blind use ares?
{PROF}.

>> DR. De CARO: It is accessible in two ways. You can have
huge font. You can change the background colors. Of course,
in addition, a person who is blind is likely also to have
special computer equipment so that whether it's first-class or
not, they will have the access on the computer itself, their
computer, but not the program. Is that what you meant?

>> Well, kind of. But with blackboard, they have some
barriers in equal access to blind users. So I would prefer to
use first-class. But I herd some people have had problems with

first-class because some of the programming or -- there are

barriers to blind people. So I was just wondering. I haven't

seen it in deaf first-class, so --

>> DR. De CARO: I have had students in the class who had

Usher's Syndrome. They were not completely blind. For them,

the large font and change in color contrast was fine. I have

not yet experienced having a student who is completely blind,

so I don't know. I would like to sit down and talk with

someone who has struggled with that question. Because that's

something else that I would like to -- I don't know yet. So

that's a good question. I will find out. Thank you.

>> Doesn't NTID or RIT use WebCT?

>> DR. De CARO: Yes. I have not.

>> Isn't that in the stipulations that you had? It is fully

accessible for blind as well as deaf?

>> DR. De CARO: So it might be that that, in the end, be
better than first-class?

>> I think so.

>> DR. De CARO: You think so. So that would be interesting. I'll go check that. Students from -- I've had a variety of experiences. With the the first-class, you get a piece of software in the mail. You install it right into your computer. You don't have to contact through web TV. You don't have to -- you've got it. Of course you still have to make your connection, your Internet connection. I've herd pluses and minuses about that. Sometimes students are very frustrated with trying to get in through the web. They can, but they find it very frustrating. That might affect the other system. Sometimes students find first-class to be very frustrating,
especially in the beginning.

>> Do you offer some kind of remediation on how to use the program to the students prior to teaching?

>> DR. De CARO: That's an important point. We have a very
strong and very helpful group of people who are essentially always there. Maybe they don't sleep. They're always there to help. With first-class, questions about technology, et cetera,
go straight to the help people. They don't even ask me. It's worked out directly that way. Sometimes people have fire walls. They're taking the course from work. They hit a fire wall. They can't get in. They work it out with the tech people. Not with me.
I get a tremendous amount of help. Any time I'm stuck, I contact people.
So I think that for someone like me, who finds technology daunting, having a really supportive and knowledgeable staff makes it possible for me to do that. Without it, I couldn't do it. I wouldn't. I'd stop right now and turn it off. So I think that's terribly critical, both for the students and for me. And we're lucky to have it.
I actually enjoyed teaching this way now. This is a
strange

thing for me to say. But I enjoy it. The students have said
to me, deaf and hearing, whether it's in class or distance,
that they like the fact that they can constantly go back and
forth with me, with the requirements of the course, with the
criteria, with each other, and they can do it any time, day or
night. They've really liked that.

For the deaf students for whom the English is a challenge,
they have told me that they appreciate the fact that, A, I'm
not grading for English. B, they got a whole week to think
about something, to make changes, to show it to somebody and
say "how do I say this?"

It's a whole week. It's not: Right there. Tell me now.
Or "write me a paper, a whole paper."

Most of these things are short. So I've gotten good
feedback from deaf and hearing students, particularly about
those things and particularly about making those links
with

either their cultures or their experience in life. It allows
them to teach others, too. I don't have to know
everything. I
don't know everything. I would like for them to teach
everybody. That's it. Thank you very much. [ CHEERS
AND
APPLAUSE. ]

>> What is the name of the course that you teach?

>> DR. De CARO: It's a good question. I never thought of

that. It's a long name. I must change it. It is "deaf
students: Educational and cultural diversity."

But if I say diversity only, people think I mean cultural
only and I don't mean only that. I mean you have
students in

the class and there's a lot of them who are all different. Oh

my gosh. 4606/1, .02 percent)